

AMERICAN LITERATURE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY 21: 352:
213: 01
MIDTERM PAPER

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Available Feb 16 at 12am - Mar 4 at 8:30am 16 days

American Literature of the Nineteenth Century 21: 352: 213: 01

Midterm paper topics

Please choose **one** of the following topics

Due uploaded to Canvas by 8:30am on Friday, February 25, 2022

Please **upload your paper to Canvas**

1. Discuss *The Scarlet Letter* and another work of your choice drawn from Irving or Hawthorne's short stories that we have discussed in class and examine the ways in which a character deceives others. Examine the motives for that character's deception and discuss how the deception contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.
2. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" is often read on its own, but it was originally published as part of a larger collection of stories that included "Rip Van Winkle," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," "The Spectre Bridegroom," and "The Mutability of Literature." How does the story relate to the other stories we have read by Washington Irving? What themes from those stories does it complicate, or what themes complicate it? (You may also make reference to other stories we discussed by Washington Irving in your response.)
3. Allegory typically refers to the figurative treatment of one subject under the guise of another. Examine the idea of allegory as it relates to "Young Goodman Brown," and "My Kinsman, Major Molineux." What seems to be the allegorical significance of each story? What aspects of the story seem most relevant to the setting of the story and which aspects suggest general themes? (You may also make reference to other stories we discussed by Nathaniel Hawthorne in your response.)
4. Using the work of each author as a point of reference, what values might have Irving and Hawthorne shared? These values can relate, for example, to good and bad, right and wrong, human nature, religion and science, or something else.

5. Discuss the relationship between imagination and reality as presented in Irving and Hawthorne. Please refer to the work of each of the authors in your response.
6. What do the stories of Irving and Hawthorne tell us about human nature? For example, are people inherently evil by nature? Or do we end up harming ourselves by believing that the world is an evil place? Please refer to the work of both authors in your examination.
7. Compare and contrast the work of Irving and Hawthorne in relation to their responses to nature, their portrayal of women, their moral concerns, or their approach to history and the past. Please refer to the work of Irving and Hawthorne in your examination.
8. Using *The Scarlet Letter*, write a well-organized essay in which you describe an “illuminating” episode (or series of episodes) and explain what they reveal about the meaning of the work as a whole.
9. Compare and contrast the idea of justice (or injustice) in the work of Irving and Hawthorne. Be sure to choose at least one work by each author in your response.
10. Nathaniel Hawthorne’s writing consistently explores a number of ideas that include guilt, sin, the nature of good and evil, and the relationship of faith, secular life, human motivation, depravity, duplicity, and free will, among others. Identify the themes that Hawthorne presents and discuss their meaning and significance in the broader context of his work.

Your writing is a crucial element of your success in this course.

Please choose one of these prompts for the midterm paper.

Your paper should be typed double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around. Your paper should contain approximately 1,500-2,000 words.

You should pay particular attention to both form and content in an effort to write a thoughtfully conceived, **well-constructed essay that clearly states a thesis and makes analytically specific, non-summarizing reference to the texts you are discussing.**

Your objective is to use this paper effectively to present ideas you have independently developed about the text and related class discussions. **This is not a research paper**, so please do not construct your paper around extensive outside sources.

The writing assignment emphasizes and reinforces fundamental writing skills including argumentative coherence, precision of expression, grammatical correctness, and accurate representation of texts. You are asked to address issues of quotation, paraphrase, and the distinctions between summary, analysis, and argument.

It is entirely possible that you will have multiple deadlines and other stressors on the date assigned as the deadline for this assignment. That is not sufficient grounds for requesting an extension. Please keep in mind that the deadline applies even if you have computer trouble. **All papers received after the deadline will be considered late.**

Midterm paper checklist:

Carefully read all texts you are assigned.

Decide on a topic about which you would like to write. You may not combine topics, alter, or otherwise modify the prompts that you are assigned.

Compose your paper keeping your chosen prompt and the paper grading guidelines in mind.

Review your work and revise your draft paper as necessary.

Proofread your work.

Upload your completed paper to Canvas **before the deadline.**

Papers uploaded to Canvas after the deadline will be considered late. All assignments that do not follow the instructions for submission will, without exception, be considered late. A word to the wise: Do not wait until the last minute to upload your paper to Canvas. If you do and there is some problem, please do not expect me to sympathize with your predicament.